

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D. C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
Allocation of Spectrum Below 5 GHz) ET Docket No. 94-32
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**COMMENTS
OF THE
UNITED STATES TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION**

The United States Telephone Association (USTA) respectfully submits its comments in the above-referenced proceeding. USTA is the principal trade association of the exchange carrier industry. Its members provide over 98 percent of the exchange carrier-provided access lines in the U. S. These companies are seeking opportunities to utilize wireless technology in the provision of telephone service.

USTA agrees with the Commission that the spectrum reallocated for private sector use has the potential to provide for the continued growth and development of telecommunications services. USTA supports the proposal advanced by Southwestern Bell that the 2390-2400 Mhz band be paired with the 2300-2310 MHz band and be used for wireless local loop service.¹

The ability to provide basic telephone service by means of radio spectrum would be in the public interest. If sufficient spectrum was made available, telephone companies would be able to

¹USTA urges the Commission to consider the allocation of the 2300-2310 MHz band in an expeditious manner as a paired allocation is essential for provision of the necessary quality of service.

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provide services in a more cost effective manner, to provide services to previously unserved and underserved areas, and to achieve greater efficiency in planning for upgrades and providing temporary and emergency communications facilities.

As Southwestern Bell has pointed out, the use of wireless local loop technology will benefit all telephone customers by reducing the cost of the telephone infrastructure and providing the capability to offer new services.² Wireless local loop technology can reduce installation and maintenance costs, provide bandwidth on demand, and reduce the cost of providing additional telephone access lines to a customer. Wireless local loop technology allows rehabilitation of aging plant to be accelerated because of lower costs and quicker deployment. Exchange carriers would be able to improve service to customers in areas where the telephone plant is older and service quality may be beginning to deteriorate and rehabilitation is difficult and costly.

The Commission must bear in mind the public interest value of the various proposals for the reallocated spectrum. Unlike the other proposals for this spectrum, the provision of wireless local loop technology will benefit all telephone customers by offering a less costly alternative to current local loop technologies, thereby maximizing the availability of basic telephone service. The In-Flight Phone proposal, for example, will benefit a small group of business aviation users. Wireless local loop will best serve the public interest in universal,

²See, Southwestern Bell's Comments filed June 15, 1994.

cost-effective telephone service.

Telephone companies have been able to utilize radio-based technology on a limited basis to deliver telephone service in rural areas through the Basic Exchange Telecommunications Radio Service (BETRS). BETRS has proven to be a cost-effective method of providing basic local exchange services to rural customers. Unfortunately, the restrictions placed on the BETRS allocation has rendered it completely inadequate for the provision of fixed service.³ Experience since 1988 has shown that the restrictions placed on the 800 MHz frequencies and the high occupancy rate at 150 MHz in rural areas have rendered the bands effectively unusable for BETRS. The 26 shared frequencies in the 450 MHz band are the most viable frequencies for BETRS, however, increased public and land mobile use continue to limit BETRS growth and expansion because of its co-primary status.⁴ Had sufficient spectrum been made available, USTA believes that, based on historical trends, a large percentage of rural customers

³See, Report and Order, CC Docket No. 86-495, 3 FCC Rcd 214 (1988); Memorandum Opinion and Order on Reconsideration, CC Docket No. 86-495, 4 FCC Rcd 5017 (1989). The Commission authorized co-primary access for BETRS in the 150 and 450 MHz bands with the Public Land Mobile Service and co-primary access to 50 channels in the 800 MHz band. The Commission also restricted use of the 800 MHz frequencies within 100 miles of the top 50 MSAs.

⁴See, In the Matter of Petition to Authorize Co-Primary Sharing of the 450 MHz Air-Ground Radiotelephone Service With BETRS, RM 8159, Reply Comments of USTA, the National Telephone Cooperative Association, Organization for the Protection and Advancement of Small Telephone Companies, the National Rural Telecom Association and the Rural Electrification Administration.

could have been served by BETRS.⁵

The Commission is proposing that users have the flexibility to choose the channelization, signal strength, modulation techniques and antenna characteristics to be employed in providing service, consistent with not causing interference to other users.⁶ USTA agrees that technical flexibility should be permitted. The Commission should allocate the full 10 MHz of bandwidth from both assigned segments in the geographic area specified by the licensee for the provision of fixed services.⁷ By allowing the spectrum to be subdivided into geographic areas specified by the licensee, telephone companies could be assured that they could serve their telephone serving area and costs required to build a wireless local loop could be kept down. Each licensee should be primary in its assigned area. USTA opposes creating channel blocks of 1-2 MHz as such an assignment would have little functional application and would be insufficient for wireless local loop technology.

Based on the foregoing, USTA urges the Commission to allocate the 2390-2400 MHz bandwidth paired with the 2300-2310

⁵Id. at p. 4.

⁶USTA agrees with Southwestern Bell that sharing the spectrum in the 2390-2400 MHz band with amateur operators would not be feasible.

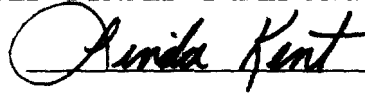
⁷The Commission has indicated that spectrum licensed to provide Personal Communications Service cannot be used to provide fixed service except on an ancillary basis. 47 CFR § 24.3. A similar requirement, that spectrum licensed to provide wireless local loop technology cannot be used to provide mobile service except on an ancillary basis, may be appropriate.

bandwidth for use by telephone companies to provide wireless
local loop technology.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION

By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda Kent", is written over a horizontal line.

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